

67-5251

7 November 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director

SAVA 574/67

SUBJECT : Understanding the War in Vietnam

1. Attached is a copy of the report of the Special Subcommittee of the House Committee on Armed Services as a result of the former's visit to Southeast Asia in April, 1966. You can get the flavor of it pretty well by reading the marked and underlined portions.

2. I think that the understanding of the American people and consequent support to the President might be enhanced if the Stratton Committee made another visit now to Southeast Asia to up-date their previous report in the same vein and with the same sort of thrust. It seems to me that the progress has been so great in the last year and a half that a new report of this sort would have considerable impact.

3. It may well be that there are political factors with which I am unfamiliar which might render such an effort counter-productive. This is something that I think can better be judged by you and would probably require the advice of the President's principal political advisors in matters involving the Congress. However, I have the strong feeling that a current report of this sort on the public record that could be emphasized in press interviews and comment by public officials might be of considerable help in countering the peaceniks.



STAT

Rufus S. Taylor  
Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy  
Deputy Director

cc: SAVA

REPORT OF SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE  
FOLLOWING VISIT TO SOUTHEAST ASIA  
APRIL 7-19, 1966

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
EIGHTY-NINTH CONGRESS  
SECOND SESSION

JULY 19, 1966



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EIGHTY-NINTH CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

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[No. 71]

**REPORT OF SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE FOLLOWING VISIT TO  
SOUTHEAST ASIA APRIL 7-19, 1966**

Hon. L. MENDEL RIVERS,  
*Chairman, House Committee on Armed Services.*

Mr. Chairman, pursuant to your directions, the undersigned members of the special 1966 subcommittee on the conflict in Vietnam traveled to Vietnam and southeast Asia during the period April 7 to April 19, 1966, and now have the honor to submit to you the following report on our trip, including our findings and specific recommendations.

I. ASSIGNMENT

In your letter dated March 15, 1966, establishing the subcommittee, you directed us as follows:

It is highly desirable that the House Committee on Armed Services be kept abreast of the activities within the jurisdiction of the Committee, particularly so far as they affect our military commitments in Southeast Asia.

While you are in South Viet Nam, I would appreciate it if you would pay particular attention to the effectiveness of our river patrols, the scope of our barrier patrols, the progress made with respect to the development of our port facilities and our airfield construction, the morale of our troops, the adequacy of their equipment, and put particular emphasis on research and development projects that should be accelerated in view of the particular conditions that we face in South Viet Nam.

When I mention equipment, I refer not only to ammunition and the like, but also to clothing of every kind.

It is further requested that you submit a report of your findings and recommendations in connection with this trip to the Committee within thirty days following your return to the United States.

This report is submitted in accordance with those directions to support and amplify the verbal report presented to you within one week of our return.

II. GENERAL ITINERARY

The subcommittee was accompanied on its trip by Brig. Gen. William G. Thrash, U.S. Marine Corps, as an observer, and Col. Frank R. Burget, U.S. Army, as Department of the Army liaison officer. During the 10-day period we traveled a total of 24,052 miles, and touched down in five different countries. Four full days were spent visiting combat installations in South Vietnam, 2 days visiting installations and conferring with U.S. officials in Thailand, 1 day conferring with U.S. officials in Tokyo, Japan, and 1 day conferring with U.S. Pacific Command officials in Honolulu. During our 4 days in South Vietnam the subcommittee traveled mostly by armed helicopter, logging a total of 2,857 miles in this war-torn country.

(9545)

Because a series of violent Buddhist street demonstrations with marked anti-American overtones had erupted in both Saigon and Da Nang several days prior to the subcommittee's scheduled departure from Washington, some doubt had been raised, as you will recall, about the desirability of the subcommittee carrying out its scheduled assignment at all. With strong support from yourself, however, and with the concurrence of both the State and Defense Departments, which you enlisted, it was finally determined that the subcommittee should proceed as originally planned, with the understanding that specific details regarding our actual itinerary in South Vietnam would be worked out with officials in Saigon in the light of current conditions after the subcommittee had arrived at some preliminary touch-down spot in the Far East, possibly Hong Kong.

On this basis the subcommittee departed Friendship Airport in Baltimore on the afternoon of April 7 and arrived in Honolulu later that same evening. Early the next morning the subcommittee met with Adm. U. S. Grant Sharp, U.S. Navy, Commander in Chief, Pacific, and was briefed for nearly 2 hours on the situation in southeast Asia by him, by top members of his staff and by his subordinate service commanders. By the time the subcommittee reached Honolulu further messages had been received from Saigon again suggesting the advisability of the subcommittee omitting South Vietnam entirely from its itinerary, in view of the possible dangers created by the continuing violence of the demonstrations. The subcommittee, however, was still determined to carry out the original assignment you had entrusted to us, and do it within the time frame indicated. Accordingly we undertook to discuss this matter at some length with Admiral Sharp, pointing out that while we did not wish to complicate Ambassador Lodge's problem during a difficult period, we believed it would be possible for us to visit combat units in the field in Vietnam without undue risk and without entering either Saigon or Da Nang. Admiral Sharp concurred with this view and agreed to suggest a suitable itinerary for our group to General Westmoreland. The subcommittee desires to record its sincere appreciation for the help which Admiral Sharp gave us in this connection. Without his assistance we might not have succeeded in visiting military installations within South Vietnam.

Before leaving Honolulu the subcommittee was advised that rioting had erupted in Hong Kong, caused by an increase in ferry rates to and from the mainland, which would make our projected overnight stopover there dangerous. The committee decided to continue on directly to Bangkok. The aircraft did touch down briefly at Hong Kong to refuel, however, and during the brief interval on the ground the committee met U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines William McC. Blair, Jr., who was returning to his post in Manila from a brief holiday.

In Bangkok, where we arrived early on Easter morning, April 10, details of our entry into Vietnam were finally worked out. While Ambassador Lodge did not interpose any objection to the itinerary finally agreed upon, which omitted both Saigon and Da Nang, he did continue to insist that he "could not guarantee the subcommittee's safety," and made it clear that if we proceeded with our itinerary we should do so with that fact clearly in mind. After conferring with

Maj. Gen. Richard Stillwell, commander of the Military Assistance Command in Thailand, who proved most helpful, the subcommittee determined that the degree of risk in the proposed itinerary was not unduly excessive. Thus, we departed Bangkok by air early on April 11 for our first touchdown in South Vietnam, at Pleiku, where we were met, on behalf of Ambassador Lodge and General Westmoreland, by Maj. Gen. Harry W. O. Kinnard, then commanding the 1st Air Cavalry Division.

Our detailed itinerary within South Vietnam is included as an appendix to this report. Speaking generally, however, the subcommittee visited each of the four Vietnam Army corps areas, met with two Vietnamese corps commanders and one Province chief, and with their U.S. advisers; visited field positions of the 1st Marine Division, the 1st Air Cavalry Division, the 1st Infantry Division, and the 25th Infantry Division; visited two special forces camps, one at Pleime and the other at Tay Ninh in War Zone C; inspected the crack South Korean Tiger Division; visited U.S. Air Force installations at Cam Ranh Bay, Bien Hoa, and Tan Son Nhut, the last only a few hours after the April 13 Vietcong mortar attack; visited the Army supply base at Cam Ranh Bay, and United States and Vietnamese naval installations for coastal and river warfare at Vung Tau and Cat Lo; spent one night on board the carrier *Enterprise* operating in the Tonkin Gulf on "Yankee Station"; and called on patients in the 93d Evacuation Hospital at Bien Hoa. In addition we conferred with Rear Adm. T. J. Walker, U.S. Navy, commander, Carrier Division 3, with Lt. Gen. Lewis W. Walt, U.S. Marine Corps, commander of the Marine Amphibious Force in Vietnam, with Maj. Gen. Gilbert L. Meyers, deputy commander of the new 7th Air Force, and with Gen. William C. Westmoreland, who interrupted a busy schedule to fly to Bien Hoa on April 14 to meet with members of the subcommittee for a most informative, no-holds-barred interview lasting more than 2 hours.

Members of the subcommittee sat in with *Enterprise* pilots during their pre-strike briefings, visited a number of Vietnamese hamlets in company with General Walt, went out on a river patrol operation with the Navy and the Coast Guard in the Mekong Delta, visited forward elements of the 1st Infantry Division during combat operations at the Courtenay Plantation in a heavy jungle area, and spent one night in the field with forward battalions of the 25th Infantry Division. The gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Chamberlain, also made one flight with a Blue Eagle aircraft during a regular TV broadcast to U.S. troops and the Vietnamese people.

During the 2 days the subcommittee spent in Thailand we conferred at length with General Stillwell and members of his staff, and with U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Graham Martin. The subcommittee also had the opportunity to visit Thai air installations at Udorn and Ubon.

Before returning to the United States the subcommittee conferred with our Ambassador to Japan, Edwin O. Reischauer. Throughout our trip the subcommittee spoke with a large number of American servicemen of all ranks, as well as with a number of Vietnamese civilians and military personnel. The findings and conclusions which follow are based on our observations and on these conversations.

9548

III. FINDINGS

**1. Progress of the war:** The subcommittee's first and major finding is that American military operations in South Vietnam are proceeding most favorably. The subcommittee believes that this favorable trend has gone largely unnoticed in the United States, partly because of a tendency of newspaper reports to focus on details of individual day-to-day battles, and partly because of the absence of frontlines in the Vietnam war in the conventional sense. The committee is of the opinion that in the months that have elapsed since U.S. forces first began to arrive in Vietnam in substantial numbers last year we have taken a firm upper hand in the fighting against the Vietcong. Our forces largely have the initiative today. They have demonstrated over and over again their ability to move successfully into any area in Vietnam. They have increased the size of the region which is largely free of Vietcong interference or domination. They have sharply cut the percentage of the local rice crop which the Vietcong have been able to seize and use. They have largely destroyed the ability of the Vietcong to operate as a coherent and organized force. They have done this by maintaining constant pressure on the Vietcong, by vigorous and continuing patrolling well beyond the perimeters of our base or "enclave" areas, and by destroying the extensive underground network of tunnels which have for years constituted Vietcong staging, rest, and rehabilitation areas; supply dumps; ammunition and weapons areas; and hiding places. While our finding does not imply that the Vietcong cannot launch offensives against us in the future, the denial to them of much of their elaborate jungle base area has gravely undermined their effectiveness in projecting their military power to any significant extent and for any sizable period beyond the immediate jungle and mountain areas.

It appears that this trend has gained in strength within the past 3 or 4 months. A year ago, when the first ad hoc subcommittee of this committee made its visit, the substantial buildup of American forces was just getting underway. Even last fall, when a number of committee members had the opportunity to visit Vietnam, most American units were beginning to move out into combat operations and test their abilities and techniques against the Vietcong in a new and largely untried kind of jungle warfare. Today the results of that test are pretty well in. Our forces have met the Vietcong and have mastered them on the field. We have demonstrated, after some painful starts, a typically American ability once again to outguess and outthink the enemy in his own unique brand of warfare. Instead of being ambushed by the Vietcong, for example, we are today successfully ambushing him. We have adapted our heavy artillery fire to the demands of jungle and tunnel warfare in brilliant fashion. Close air support techniques for ground operations have now been successfully worked out. The subcommittee found no complaints on this score at all, from any quarter. The helicopter has, of course, proved to be a vital and tremendously effective part of this new ability to outfight the enemy in his own terrain. It has, in fact, been the one indispensable weapon system in this conflict. And our long-range strategic B-52 bombers have proved a most helpful adjunct to the

specialized demands of jungle warfare and their usefulness is now fully recognized. Tanks, too, have been adapted for use in some phases of jungle warfare, and are proving helpful in detonating landmines which cause such a large percentage of our infantry casualties. American troops clearly have the momentum today, and we believe full advantage should be taken of this momentum.

So successful has been our military progress that the subcommittee believes we are moving steadily toward victory over the Vietcong, provided we can keep infiltration from the north within something like present limits, and provided, too, that we can have reasonable political stability within South Vietnam.

The subcommittee recognizes the probability that concerted Vietcong attacks will occur during the monsoon season. But we were impressed with the view expressed to us by several top U.S. field commanders, that the monsoon season need not necessarily be advantageous for Vietcong forces. While the rains do restrict our own air and ground activity to some degree, they also restrict his ground activity. And our helicopters can still operate during much of the rainy season, even in the mud. We are therefore confident that any monsoon offensive will be just as decisively beaten back this year as it was a year ago.

Much of the published comment on our position in Vietnam, especially from those who are not particularly conversant with military matters, professes to see some kind of parallel between our position in Vietnam today and that of the French more than a decade ago. But no one who has had the occasion to visit Vietnam, and see at first-hand the size of our military forces, the impressive morale of our men, the quality of our equipment, and the vast scope of our supply facilities, could possibly think there is any really meaningful parallel between French military experience in Vietnam and our own. Moreover, our forces have been doing an outstanding job in the civic action field, helping the people of Vietnam in their own communities, and we believe the people of Vietnam recognize this help and appreciate it. The American people deserve to be told, again and again, of the outstanding job our troops are doing in Vietnam. They can well be proud of that job.

**2. Clearing and holding:** To be sure, the subcommittee recognizes that a military victory in Vietnam—in the sense of destroying the Vietcong as an organized and effective fighting force—will not by itself lead to the establishment of a stable, orderly and prosperous government in South Vietnam. But we do believe that once the major military threat, and the longstanding hidden bases which have sustained it for more than 20 years, have been destroyed, the admittedly long and complex job of restoring law and order and developing the machinery of a stable governmental structure in Vietnam will become much more manageable, and then can largely be worked out by the Vietnamese themselves, with such outside help as they may need or request. We feel strongly that military victory over the Vietcong can be achieved without first solving all the complex political and economic problems which currently face that unhappy country.

Today American forces can move into almost any part of Vietnam, establish effective control, and drive out the Vietcong. This was never the case with Vietnamese forces by themselves. War zone C, for ex-

ample, had never before been penetrated by friendly forces until the 1st Infantry Division went in there the other day with remarkable success.

Our biggest problem is that once our forces leave an area (as the 1st Infantry Division, for example, left the Courtenay Plantation at Binh Ba to move into War Zone C) some Vietcong troops move back in. Two things are necessary to deal with this situation. The first is greater numbers. As U.S. forces in Vietnam increase, perhaps U.S. units can conduct most of the initial "search and destroy" missions and leave it to Vietnamese Army (ARVN) forces to follow through in clearing and permanently holding these areas. We believe a system can and must be worked out to put more ARVN forces into areas already covered by U.S. search and destroy operations, so as to prevent this reinfiltration by Communist troops. An increase in the size and training of ARVN forces may be needed for this purpose. Desertion continues to be a problem which limits the effectiveness of ARVN forces, though this is not desertion to the VC.

The other thing that must be done is to carry out aggressive and regular patrolling of all areas already covered by search and destroy operations. Field commanders told us that an area once covered by a vigorous search and destroy operation does not revert, when our own military forces leave, to the same degree of Vietcong control as prevailed before the search and destroy operation began. Local supporting installations have been destroyed. Local populations are even more hostile. By continuing to send regular patrols through these areas, as the Marines are doing at Chu Lai, we keep them reasonably free of Vietcong control, even though our military forces are no longer physically stationed on the site.

We have heard a good deal in recent months about the supposed virtues of an "enclave" strategy for Vietnam. Actually we are already operating from "enclaves" in Vietnam. Every one of our bases is defended around a 360° perimeter, whether at Ankhe with the 1st Cavalry, at Can Tho with the advisory group to the 4th ARVN Corps, or at Cu Chi with the 25th Infantry Division. But in each of these cases we operate *from* the "enclaves," we just don't sit passively inside them. In extending our searches and carrying on our patrols, we are employing a familiar "forward" strategy and thereby spreading the "oil spot" areas of our effective control farther and farther beyond the immediate "enclave" area. Seventy percent of 1st Air Cavalry units, for example, are operating at any one time far beyond their "enclave" area at Ankhe. Merely to remain passively within these base locations, on the other hand, would be suicidal against as aggressive and determined an enemy as the Vietcong, and would surrender the balance of the countryside to them by default.

**3. Maps as a measure of progress:** The subcommittee also believes that the attempt to understand the progress of fighting in Vietnam by means of colored areas on a map can be seriously misleading. In Vietnam mere acreage is not the most reliable index of control. Unless one visits Vietnam it is difficult to appreciate just how much of this country is covered by high mountains and almost impenetrable jungles. The vast majority of the people live, and the vast majority of business is carried out, in the relatively small areas which comprise Saigon, the Mekong Delta to the southeast, the various coastal plain

9551

cities, such as Qui Nhon, Danang, Hue, and the network of roads or rivers connecting them. If these populated areas and their connecting lines of communication can be secured, as we are now doing, it is not really too important whether the Vietcong continue to roam through the mountains and jungles, provided we have destroyed, as we are now destroying, their ability to establish within these inaccessible areas bases from which to mount well-equipped, well-supplied, and well-organized attacks on the populated areas. Substantial areas of the Mekong Delta, for example, have now been secured in this way. Route 19 between Pleiku and the coast, which the Vietcong were in the process of seizing in early 1965 to cut South Vietnam in two, has now been opened to traffic, at least by day, and to some extent even by night. The area around Qui Nhon, occupied by the Korean division, which had been 75 percent dominated by the Vietcong when they first moved in, is now regarded as almost entirely in our control. Indeed the accomplishments of the Korean division in Vietnam have been outstanding, not only militarily but in carrying out those civic actions which build the support and confidence of the Vietnamese. In both the II Corps area and the delta the rice crop now goes chiefly into government rather than into Vietcong channels, another reliable index of area control. In the IV Corps area the population under ARVN control went from 36 to 51 percent in 1965, embracing 2.7 million of the 5 million population, for a gain of 813,000 people. All these are concrete evidences of the progress we have made. Jungles and mountains by themselves simply cannot serve as a base for effective Vietcong control over Vietnam. Our objective must continue to be to insure that the use of these inaccessible areas by the Vietcong as military sanctuaries is effectively denied. Insofar as we succeed in this we strengthen the stability of the populated areas where the long-term future of Vietnam must eventually be determined.

4. **What does "winning" the Vietnam war mean?** We have said we believe we can win this war in Vietnam and that we are in fact moving in that direction. What precisely do we mean by "winning"? We mean this: so disrupting and destroying the ability of Vietcong forces that, despite whatever additions and support may be infiltrated from outside South Vietnam, the Vietcong are unable to mount sustained or organized attacks on South Vietnamese populated areas; and so that such sporadic acts of terrorism or attack as do occur can be contained and dealt with by Vietnamese troops or police personnel. Victory would certainly mean the gradual reduction of military incidents in South Vietnam to a point that would permit an orderly sequence of free, popular elections and the establishment of a permanent type of South Vietnamese Government based on popular choice. And it would mean a situation in which the major share of responsibility for maintaining local order and control falls on the Vietnamese themselves.

Such a condition may not mean the immediate end of all American presence in Vietnam. But it should certainly permit a gradual reduction in the numbers of American combat troops required there, and it should also mean that the extent and character of any continuing American presence would be determined by agreement between the United States and the duly elected Government of Vietnam. Ex-

pressed in these terms, we feel it is already possible to see the light of "victory" at the end of the tunnel.

**5. The nature of the Vietcong:** No one can fully understand the war in Vietnam without understanding the unusual nature of the enemy we face there, the Vietcong. On the basis of our observations the subcommittee offers the following comments:

There has been an impression created in some quarters that the Vietcong are just a ragtag military outfit, composed of dissident local farmers and peasants, with a rifle slung over their shoulders and a couple of days' supply of rice in their pockets, who can subsist for endless periods in the jungle and create great havoc with a handful of meager weapons. Such is decidedly not the case. The Vietcong are a well-organized, well-equipped military outfit. They are able fighters and are respected as such by our own troops. The major source of their support is a fantastically extensive network of underground tunnels dug deep into the hills and jungles of South Vietnam. Some of these tunnel establishments go back to the days of the fighting against the Japanese in World War II. Tunnel complexes which our forces have uncovered and destroyed have contained such unlikely features as a 400-bed military hospital, with modern drugs and surgical tools; caches of rice and other supplies adequate to last for months; elaborate dumps of weapons and ammunition, mostly of Communist Chinese and partly of Soviet manufacture, including recoilless rifles, heavy mortars, and machineguns; tractors and trailers; sizable barracks areas; rest and recreation facilities; uniforms as well as numerous civilian disguises; even a printing plant for turning out propaganda. The recent operations of the 1st Infantry Division in War Zone C have turned up further examples of these incredible Vietcong tunnel base areas. It is these tunnels, many of them ringing Saigon within a few miles, that have sustained Vietcong operations in past years and have enabled the Vietcong to hit and run safely. Without these complex tunnels the nature of the Vietcong threat must undergo very drastic changes.

While we cannot estimate specific percentages, the subcommittee was informed that substantial numbers of Vietcong forces are in fact indigenous South Vietnamese, directly recruited into the Vietcong organization. This recruiting still goes on in South Vietnam. In general the Vietcong have two basic recruiting approaches. One is the outright propaganda approach. Admittedly the lot of the Vietnamese peasant has never been an easy one. Admittedly he is unhappy with a war that, in one form or another, has been swinging back and forth across his land for nearly 30 years. Admittedly he is fearful and apprehensive, like most Asian peoples, of foreigners in his country, especially white ones. Vietcong recruiters have appealed to all these emotions, plus the panoply of glittering pie-in-the-sky promises which are traditional with Communists, promises whose fallaciousness is not revealed until it is too late to do much about them. The Vietcong do have many of the propaganda factors in Vietnam going in their direction.

But the major source of Vietcong recruiting power is still naked terror. Assassination, violence, and kidnapping are responsible for the largest numbers of new recruits. In areas controlled by the Vietcong there is little alternative to carrying out the military orders of a harsh and brutal occupying power.

But do the people really support the Vietcong? Do they go along with ARVN and U.S. force only reluctantly? Is the Vietcong movement really grounded deeply in the wishes and aspirations of the people themselves, so that no military victory on our part can wholly eliminate it? The subcommittee strongly believes that the answer to these questions is "No."

We recognize that there is substantial sentiment among many Vietnamese peasants for just going along with whatever group or power happens at the moment to be on top, regardless of ideology, in the hope that thereby one can best be left alone to cultivate his garden. But those peasants who have had practical experience with Vietcong control have quickly learned that Communist practice never measures up to Communist promise. They have seen atrocities committed, as those we saw in pictures at Can Tho, for example. They have witnessed violence and assassination. They have seen their sons and daughters carried off, their rice crops expropriated, their local leaders murdered, some 2,000 of them since 1954.

We are convinced by what we saw that the great bulk of the Vietnamese people do not want to live under the terroristic regime of the Vietcong, so long as we or the Vietnamese forces can guarantee them some reasonable measure of security from the Vietcong. What is hardest for them is to be caught in a seesaw movement in which control of their village passes from Vietcong to ARVN or United States and then back to Vietcong again. In such circumstances the local citizen knows he will be punished, perhaps killed, for having "collaborated" with U.S. or ARVN forces. A province chief was assassinated at Phuoc Vinh, for instance, a base for part of the 1st Infantry Division, for cooperating with our troops. We saw the memorial erected to his memory. A priest at Cu Chi is accompanied today by an armed American bodyguard wherever he goes. The Vietcong have put a price on his head because his church had been a favorite Vietcong meeting place before the U.S. 25th Division moved into the area. The village chief near the Courtenay plantation at Binh Ba feared for his life once the 1st Division moved out. Obviously the ability to provide reasonable local security on a continuing basis is an indispensable requirement for holding the support of the Vietnamese and building a stable civilian government.

No doubt the Vietnamese do not entirely love Americans. There is an element of xenophobia in the Vietnamese, as there is in most Asians. For that matter the American servicemen was not always unanimously popular even in Australia or England during World War II. But we are convinced that the Vietnamese are no more interested in living the rest of their lives under a regime of terror and violence than are other people and, therefore, welcome just as anybody else would the opportunity to shape their own destiny in some reasonable degree of security and peace. In areas where our military victories have given them this opportunity, as in the city of Can Tho, population 70,000, which we visited, and in the hamlets near Chu Lai, where General Walt took us, the people seemed genuinely pleased to see Americans. The children were happy to be able to go back to school, as we saw them going. And all the people were grateful for the medical help which Navy hospital corpsmen

9554

serving with the Marines were furnishing at a daily village sick call.

So we are convinced that the great majority of the Vietnamese do not support the Vietcong. They know the Communists as a harsh, brutal, and violent organization, fighting not a struggle for reform and reformation but a struggle for power and possession. Perhaps the best proof of this point is the sharply rising percentage of "ralliers" we are picking up now in Vietnam; that is, South Vietnamese who had joined up originally with the Vietcong and then deserted. In the 4th Corps area, for example, ralliers have increased by 100 percent this year. In the 2d Corps area 2,000 ralliers have come over so far this year. The growth of the raller movement, plus a substantial improvement in the quality of our intelligence from local Vietnamese, are the best proofs of the growing political support that has accompanied our improving military position. Still another revealing feature is the very substantial number of refugees who have voluntarily moved out of areas controlled by the Vietcong and into areas under our control. They have chosen to leave their traditional homes rather than submit to Communist control.

Having reported at some length on our findings with regard to the general military situation in Vietnam and its prospects for the future, we turn our attention now to the specific questions raised by the chairman in his original directions. Of these perhaps the most important, and certainly the most timely, is the matter of supply and possible shortages of military equipment, ammunition, and clothing.

**6. Supply and shortages:** Speaking in general terms, for the areas we visited, our findings support the statements made in recent weeks by Department of Defense officials, viz, that no serious shortages exist, none at least that have undermined our military position or have resulted in the elimination of projected combat missions against the enemy. Everywhere we inquired closely about the supply situation with military personnel of all ranks. We were greatly impressed with the supply buildup that has been achieved in Vietnam in a relatively short period, reminiscent of the logistic miracles that were so commonplace in World War II. Cam Ranh Bay, our largest supply base in Vietnam, which started almost from scratch a year ago, is progressing remarkably. A year ago a large number of ships were backed up there for weeks. On the day we visited Cam Ranh one berth was actually open at a pier. No fair appraisal of the overall supply situation in Vietnam can be made without recognizing the magnitude of this achievement. As one subcommittee member observed, "Now I see how we plan to get rid of the Vietcong—we're going to crowd them out with all this stuff we're bringing in."

In his discussion with the subcommittee General Westmoreland gave us some further measure of the extent of the American supply miracle when he acknowledged that he faced a very difficult decision a year ago. Should he request the urgent buildup of troops he believed necessary to prevent the Vietcong victory that was then imminent, even though supply facilities to support such a force were then nonexistent? He made the decision to go ahead with the troop buildup, of course, and do the best he could to get them all the supplies they needed. The gamble paid off. The needed troops arrived in time to stave off a Vietcong victory, and no American combat mission

was washed out because necessary material resources were not at hand. Of course in the process there were some tight moments. Ships were backed up for weeks at Cam Ranh Bay, waiting to unload, and incurring heavy demurrage charges in the process. But while these ships swung at anchor they also provided a floating supply dump for forces ashore. Needed items could always be lightered in as required. So the troops got to Vietnam when they were needed, though we originally had no basic supply structure there to serve them, and somehow the equipment has reached them there in time.

Although the subcommittee found no serious shortages, we did receive, however, beginning with discussions at Pacific Command headquarters in Honolulu, evidence of a number of temporary shortages in various items and of varying degrees of concern. These resulted, we were told, not from basic inadequacies of stocks but from delays in shipping, interruptions in unloading (as during the Buddhist riots in Da Nang, for example), or temporary breakdowns in distribution within Vietnam itself, conditions similar to those often encountered in any active theater of war. Mentioned specifically in this connection were bomb fuses, flares, jungle boots, and tropical uniforms.

In general our contact with Army units revealed no shortages, even of this variety. We did see at first hand during the night we spent with the 25th Infantry Division at Cu Chi the fantastic use that is being made of illuminating shells in night perimeter defense. But even there we did not hear any complaints of shortages in this item. The 1st Infantry Division did speak to us, however, of the need for more heavy-lift Chinook helicopters to meet its full requirement for mobile jungle operations. A recent engagement in which one company, surrounded by a Vietcong battalion, had been evacuated by ladders into Chinook helicopters hovering over the 120-foot jungle trees, more than proved the worth of these aircraft to the division. General Westmoreland assured us that orders for extra Chinooks were already in the mill and moving along properly. Nevertheless, the subcommittee cannot urge too strongly that increased efforts be made to produce and ship these Chinooks to Vietnam with all possible speed. The Special Forces camp at Tay Ninh in War Zone C is also in need of integral helicopters of any sort. One of its outposts, for example, sits atop Nuy Ba Den Mountain, the balance of which is in the hands of the Vietcong, so that the only possible access is by helicopter.

It was in the air units, both Marine and Air Force, that we encountered the most frequent reports of shortages. The Marine air wing at Chu Lai, for example, reported they were currently short of napalm and 2.5 rockets, although this shortage was acknowledged to be mainly the result of unloading tieups at Da Nang resulting from recent Buddhist riots.

The 12th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Cam Ranh Bay, whose F-4C aircraft furnish close-air support for ground units in the II Corps area, reported shortages of 20-millimeter ammunition and napalm, but understood that some of these shortages were also the result of delays in unloading. Air units at Bien Hoa complained of shortages of ammunition, especially 750-pound bombs. In such situations different weight bombs, of 200, 500, or 1,000 pounds, have been substituted. The subcommittee also found that air missions in Vietnam operate under strict orders to return as soon as their assigned targets have been hit,

without attempting to unload any unexpended ordnance on other possible targets. Thus aircraft will frequently return with unexpended ordnance.

Navy units we visited reported no shortages. The river warfare forces at Cat Lo were looking forward to getting the new hovercraft air cushion vehicles and also remarked very favorably on the fast production schedule that had gotten the new plastic PBR boats out to them so rapidly after those craft first went onto the drawing board.

**7. Port development:** The major new military port in Vietnam is the one under development at Cam Ranh Bay. Our visit there was most reassuring. Cam Ranh now has two piers in operation, one of which is at DeLong. One LST unloading ramp is also in operation and another under construction.

The Cam Ranh depot, which serves Army troops in central Vietnam, reported no shortages. They maintain a regular system of roving field expeditors whose purpose is to troubleshoot supply problems. These expeditors, we were told, had encountered no shortage problems in this area. A POL tank farm had been completed, but only one of the tanks had been grounded. In the interim fuel is being stored on the ground in huge rubber bladders. Many items at this depot, however, are still below their individual buildup objectives. Tropical trousers, jungle boots, and undershirts are in this category, and also some heavy machinery spare parts. But all these items have been requisitioned, we were informed, and some are already en route. It was also emphasized that when an item is below supply objectives it does not mean that combat units are actually going without anything they need. As our brief experience demonstrated, however, the Vietnam jungle is extremely hard on clothing. Our tropical fatigues stand up only for 4 or 5 days in the jungle, so frequent replacements are necessary and future demands on present supply could increase sharply.

The committee was informed that the Cam Ranh Bay base is intended to serve forces in the central area of South Vietnam, roughly the II Corps area. The port of Saigon would then serve as a supply area for forces in the III and IV Corps areas, and Da Nang would be developed to supply forces in the I Corps area. Qui Nhon is suited only for unloading LST's over the beach. In the case of Saigon, the committee did observe a fairly large number of merchant ships anchored at Cape St. Jacques off Vung Tau in the Mekong Delta at the mouth of the Wonsak (Saigon) River, waiting their turn to go up to Saigon to unload. So unloading delays and demurrage charges are apparently still a factor in Saigon even if they are no longer a problem at Cam Ranh, and further action may have to be taken to deal with this problem.

**8. Naval operations, barrier and river patrols:** Naval carrier operations against targets in North Vietnam appear to us to be proceeding well. We also witnessed the U.S. cruiser *Canberra* conducting shore bombardment operations against Communist positions. We found opinion as to the desirability of commissioning an additional reserve fleet cruiser or battleship for naval gunfire support purposes. Admiral Sharp told us he had recommended recommissioning another such cruiser. General Walt favored either a battleship or a cruiser, especially, he said, during the monsoon season when close air support

is less available. On the other hand, General Hollingsworth, assistant commander of the 1st Division, told us the flat naval gunfire trajectory would make these ships unsuitable for support missions well inland where most ground troops would be likely to be operating. Instead he recommended the assignment of an additional tactical air squadron as more flexible for support to his division.

General Walt also recommended that reserve fleet merchant ships be anchored offshore to provide needed electrical generating capacity for installations ashore.

We found our naval barrier patrols, operating along the Vietnam coast in Operation Market Time, proceeding well. These are designed to interdict Vietcong resupply operations from the sea to the shore. The Navy informed the subcommittee that they were regularly stopping and searching some 2,000 junks a day. Of these only a very few, however, had been found to be carrying military contraband. Nevertheless, the Navy conceded there were practical limitations to the maintenance of an absolutely airtight barrier to Vietcong resupply from the sea, especially at night. For example, the need for Vietnamese civilians in the area around Qui Nhon to engage in their normal fishing occupation by night as well as day makes any nighttime coastal curfew in this area impossible. American Army advisory personnel told us they believed that Vietcong units operating in the Mekong Delta are still being supplied by sea. A recent Marine operation along the Saigon River, Operation Jack Stay, turned up a 200-bed Vietcong hospital built on stilts in the long grasses of the delta. Market Time officials said they would regard their barriers as successful if they reduced the chances of Vietcong infiltration to 25 percent.

Members of the subcommittee went out on Coast Guard WPB's, and the Navy's new "Swifties" and PBR boats to observe these river patrol operations, and were impressed with the courage of the crews as well as the firepower available to them.

Considerably less reassuring to us, however, was the patrol situation on the Mekong River itself, an operation with the code name Game Warden. At the time of our visit no patrols had even been put into operation, although we were told they would begin on May 1. Because of the number of ships and junks which proceed regularly up the Mekong River, the committee is deeply concerned that substantial amounts of war material may be reaching the Vietcong by way of the Mekong. We were told that because the Mekong is an "international waterway," there are limits to what can be done to control this traffic. The subcommittee is not entirely convinced, however, that everything possible is presently being done to deal with the serious threat to our own troops posed by the possibility of Vietcong resupply through the Mekong River.

**9. Airfield construction:** The subcommittee's itinerary included three major military airfields: Tan Son Nhut just outside Saigon, both a military and commercial field, in fact the largest and busiest in the world; Bien Hoa, primarily military, some 30 miles northeast of Saigon; and the Air Force strip at Cam Ranh Bay. We also visited the Marine field at Chu Lai; the Army field at Pleiku; and smaller fields at Qui Nhon, Cat Lo, Tay Ninh, and Cam Ranh village. All of these except Tan Son Nhut and Bien Hoa are metal matting strips. The Air Force strip at Cam Ranh, covered by aluminum matting, is

scheduled to be replaced by a concrete runway, but the civilian contractor's timetable has slipped badly. Only very preliminary grading has been started. Meanwhile the temporary aluminum matting has become slippery and dangerous, especially when wet.

The Marine field at Chu Lai, about 4,000 feet in length, is also slated for extension and replacement with a concrete strip, but work there too has moved slowly. Meanwhile it appears to be functioning adequately as a SATS short-landing and takeoff field. Takeoffs are assisted with JATO bottles, and arresting gear has been installed for landings when needed. A steam catapult was in the process of being installed when we were there.

The April 13 mortar attack on Tan Son Nhut raised in our minds serious questions about the quality of protection which this major field receives. With 6,000 flights per month, 450 aircraft based on the field, and some 10,000 personnel on the base, Tan Son Nhut is busier than O'Hare in Chicago. Metal revetments already in place saved many planes during the mortar attack, but more revetments are needed. Our reaction to the April 13 attack does not seem to have been as swift or vigorous as one might have expected. Perhaps the defense of this key field should be transferred from Vietnamese to United States personnel. Until the necessary additional revetments are built, perhaps we ought also to consider greater dispersal of the combat aircraft at Tan Son Nhut, possibly with the help of an additional aircraft carrier.

**10. Morale:** One of the most remarkable things about our military operations in Vietnam is the unusually high morale of our troops. It impresses us as being as high or higher than in any other recent military operation we have been engaged in. This is even more remarkable in view of the highly vocal opposition to our involvement in Vietnam that has been expressed in some quarters here at home.

The high American morale apparently stems from two or three causes. First and foremost is our policy of rotating combat troops out of Vietnam after 1 year. In this way every soldier or marine knows in advance the time of his departure, and how much longer his combat commitment will be. Air personnel are usually rotated after 100 combat missions.

Of course, such a rotation policy is not without its problems. A very substantial proportion of the ground troops now in Vietnam arrived there last summer and early fall. Thus, we face a rotation "hump" problem in the near future. Administrative steps are being taken to ease the impact of this hump, though we will still need to bring large numbers of new troops into Vietnam within the next few months to replace those scheduled for rotation.

A second reason for high morale lies, we believe, in the excellent job being done by our top military command to inform our soldiers of the reasons for their service in Vietnam. Orientation talks in each division, and direct contacts between troops and the Vietnamese people, have convinced our servicemen they are in Vietnam not just to fight but also to help a people get on its feet as a new and free nation. In the 25th Division, for example, we heard the comment: "Morale is better here than it was when we were in Hawaii. Out here the boys know they have a job to do, and they're anxious to get it done." Nearly every combat unit we visited, including the Korean Tiger Division, took special pride in describing for us the various "civic

action" projects in which they were engaged to help local Vietnamese citizens in their area.

The subcommittee was particularly impressed with the program being carried out at the direction of General Westmoreland to encourage more harmonious relationships between Americans and Vietnamese. Each new American soldier is issued the following card when he arrives:

NINE RULES FOR PERSONNEL OF U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM

The Vietnamese have paid a heavy price in suffering for their long fight against the communists. We military men are in Vietnam now because their government has asked us to help its soldiers and people in winning their struggle. The Vietcong will attempt to turn the Vietnamese people against you. You can defeat them at every turn by the strength, understanding, and generosity you display with the people. Here are nine simple rules:

NINE RULES

1. Remember we are guests here: We make no demands and seek no special treatment.
2. Join with the people! Understand their life, use phrases from their language and honor their customs and laws.
3. Treat women with politeness and respect.
4. Make personal friends among the soldiers and common people.
5. Always give the Vietnamese the right of way.
6. Be alert to security and ready to react with your military skill.
7. Don't attract attention by loud, rude or unusual behavior.
8. Avoid separating yourself from the people by a display of wealth or privilege.
9. Above all else you are members of the U.S. Military Forces on a difficult mission, responsible for all your official and personal actions. Reflect honor upon yourself and the United States of America.

Still another reason for high morale is the splendid quality of medical care available. Because of the helicopter we can move battlefield casualties quickly and directly to a major rear-area hospital, and as a result only 1 percent of those wounded in battle in Vietnam have died of wounds, compared to 5 percent in World War II. Neuro-psychiatric casualties are almost nonexistent, in contrast to Korea and World War II. Our subcommittee's visit to the 93d Evacuation Hospital demonstrated that even wounded personnel display unusually good morale and have a high regard for the quality of the medical treatment they are receiving.

The subcommittee believes that the high quality of officer and NCO leadership being provided to the troops in Vietnam is another important reason for the high morale we observed.

The subcommittee did note several points which could help in maintaining high morale. For example, some improvement in rest and rehabilitation opportunities is needed. In general a combat soldier in Vietnam can count on only one 5- or 6-day R. & R. period during a normal 12-month tour. With the current emphasis on keeping American personnel out of major South Vietnam population centers as much as possible, we believe that a more liberal R. & R. program should be quickly developed.

We understand that some troops have complained about the absence of fresh milk and vegetables, although combat mess fare in most parts of Vietnam struck us as being a notch or two above what it was in World War II. Efforts to provide such additional items, at least

in essentially garrison conditions, might well pay dividends, we believe.

Mail seems to be reaching Vietnam rapidly. Congress was well advised in taking action to expedite air mail delivery to and from Vietnam. Any expansion of this service would of course contribute to continued high morale.

**11. Possible research and development projects:** Pursuant to the chairman's request the subcommittee made extensive inquiries about possible research and development projects that might prove helpful to our operations in Vietnam. The following were suggested to us.

(a) *People sensors.*—The biggest R. & D. need in Vietnam, with its thick jungles and mountains and extensive network of underground tunnels, continues to be the development of some device to detect the presence of people who cannot be seen.

(b) *Protection against dust.*—Dust, hard, red dust, is typical in Vietnam and takes a heavy toll in corrosion and erosion of our helicopters, trucks, and other machinery. Dust is an especially acute problem with helicopters. Engines that normally run 1,000 to 1,600 hours without overhaul must be overhauled in Vietnam after only 300 hours because of the dust. Some protection against its effects is desperately needed.

(c) *Longer delay fuzes.*—Because so much of the fighting in Vietnam must be conducted in jungle areas, there is need for longer delay fuzes on our bombs and artillery, to permit ordnance to penetrate jungle growth and reach the ground before exploding.

(d) *Sturdier jungle uniforms.*—Action in the jungle has also proved especially hard on U.S. tropical fatigue uniforms. These last at most from 4 to 5 days in jungle operations. Without adding to their weight or degrading their comfort, material should be developed to stand up longer in rugged jungle operations.

(e) *Fresh milk and fresh vegetables.*—As indicated above, it would also be worthwhile to explore ways and means of supplying fresh milk and vegetables to combat troops in Vietnam, or at least the best possible substitutes. In the case of milk, for example, research might improve the taste of "sterile" milk, that is, milk prepared for shipment without refrigeration. Or the Army might explore the feasibility of utilizing "blender" devices already on the market, which reconstitute powdered milk with butter so as to taste almost like fresh milk.

(f) *A COIN aircraft.*—Marine aviators and others continue to urge development of the new counterinsurgency (COIN) aircraft that has been promised for so long. Such an aircraft could help in closer troop support operations, in its ability to loiter on station, and as a forward air controller.

(g) *Antitruck bombs.*—With increased emphasis being placed on interdicting the movement of troops and supplies from North Vietnam, much of it now done by truck, there is an urgent need for developing ordnance that can close down these roads for longer periods than those relatively brief moments when attack aircraft are actually overhead. Enemy trucks can now move at night except when under actual attack or where roads have been entirely blocked. The subcommittee understands that during the Korean war a kind of "butterfly" bomb was employed against North Korean roads, small bombs with delayed action fuzes that were scattered across an enemy road and would not

explode until hit or until after a period of delay. These proved effective in stopping all enemy truck traffic at night following a single air attack. No such bomb is presently in use against Vietcong supply roads today. We believe its development and use along infiltration routes and at supply "choke points" would prove extremely helpful, and should be expedited.

**12. Political comments:** The subcommittee recognizes that it cannot speak with authority or expertise on the complex political situation in Vietnam. Our assignment was not in this field, our stay in Vietnam was all too brief, and because of the restrictions imposed by the disorders at the time we were unable to hold any discussions with American or Vietnamese civilian or diplomatic officials. Nevertheless, the military and political situations are closely intertwined in Vietnam, and recent events do raise the possibility that the military victory we now seem to be in the process of winning could be thrown away by political disturbances in one or two major cities. As a result of our tour we formed several impressions on these matters which Members may find of interest.

Everyone recognizes that successful realization of our objectives in South Vietnam involves the establishment of a government there which has substantial popular support and which can maintain law and order. Our military and diplomatic officials are working hard toward this result. It should not, however, be forgotten that Vietnam has no tradition of representative or democratic government, and has in fact existed as a separate independent nation only since 1954. It is still a poor, backward, underdeveloped Asian country with a very low literacy rate. For years it was occupied and dominated first by the French and then by the Japanese, both of whom kept the country so fragmented and divided that no group could successfully challenge the occupying authority. Over the years the natural leaders of the country were either wiped out or sent away. And since 1956 the Vietcong terror campaign has further eroded this potential Vietnamese leadership, with more than 2,000 village leaders either captured or assassinated since that time.

These facts complicate the establishment of effective election procedures in Vietnam. Yet we must begin to move in that direction, and the subcommittee regards the elections for a constituent assembly, now scheduled for September 11, as a necessary and desirable step toward the drafting of a constitution and the creation of a government which will be more representative of important religious and political groups in South Vietnam.

We are inclined to agree with the view that the recent political demonstrations in Vietnam do represent a recognition on the part of many South Vietnamese people that the military war against the Vietcong is going favorably.

Looking ahead to the composition of a postwar government while still at war is not unusual. In a society with more of a democratic tradition than Vietnam the political "outs" might have set up their soap boxes in the park, or written letters to the editor, or sounded off to their Congressman. But none of these avenues is open in Vietnam. Street demonstrations with violent overtones seem the only real way they know of attracting the attention of public opinion.

In view of the anti-American overtones of recent demonstrations, the question naturally does arise whether the Vietnamese people want the Americans to leave? Are they really unappreciative of the help we have given them in resisting a Communist invasion from the north? Our observations convince us that the answer to both questions is an emphatic "No." The Vietnamese people are in favor of what we are doing to help them, we believe, and do want us to stay. Despite a genuine Vietnamese suspicion of foreigners, we saw no evidence of anti-American sentiment in the areas we visited. Such sentiment as has been expressed we believe to be limited in location and scope and not representative of the sentiment of the people as a whole. We do not believe that the Vietnamese would ever freely vote to let the Vietcong take over their country, and this judgment appears to be supported by the fact that even during the latest demonstrations against the Ky government, not a single opposition leader has suggested siding with the Vietcong.

In connection with these demonstrations it is well to remember that Vietnam is a highly fragmented society. Except for the military there is hardly any group that exercises influence on a countrywide basis. A large segment of the population are regarded as Buddhists in Vietnam. Yet the fact is that the Buddhist movement is far from monolithic. One group is centered in the north, another in the delta. Others are located elsewhere. There is no one Buddhist leader, not even Tri Quang, who can claim to speak for all Buddhists. Several top Vietnamese generals with whom the subcommittee conferred were Buddhists, yet they disagreed vehemently with the course which Tri Quang and his followers had been advocating.

There are a number of other groups that have also demonstrated a measure of political power and interest, for example, the Catholics and the Cao Dai religious group, whose central temple we flew over in Tay Ninh. The best chance for setting up a stable and effective government would seem to us to lie in the creation of some kind of coalition arrangement between the military junta and several of these more significant civilian or religious groups. This, we believe, is the most urgent political need at the moment, and the current movement toward new elections is directed toward meeting this need. No government can survive in Vietnam without the support of the military, since, as we have already observed, it is the one group whose influence extends throughout the whole country. On the other hand, as we are now witnessing, it will be increasingly difficult for a purely military government, without civilian representation, to govern effectively.

Yet this task is not a simple one and certainly cannot be accomplished overnight. Americans will need patience, perspective and perseverance to see Vietnam through what is bound to be a difficult transition period.

**13. What more can we do?** The subcommittee now turns to a matter which occupied much attention throughout our visit: what more, if anything, should be done to speed victory in Vietnam?

(a) Should we, for example, be bombing more in North Vietnam?—  
The subcommittee supports bombing operations now being carried out in the north as necessary for limiting North Vietnamese resupply and reinforcement operations to the south. While aerial bombing has not

shut off this resupply entirely, and probably never will, it does limit the extent of these reinforcements and thus reduces the size of the military threat.

(b) *Cambodia*.—The subcommittee is deeply concerned about the possibility that Cambodia's neutrality is being violated by the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese. The subcommittee received several unconfirmed reports that Cambodia is being used as a sanctuary and supply base for the Vietcong. War Zone C in the area north and west of Tay Ninh is apparently a major Vietcong headquarters. Recent operations through that area by the 1st Infantry Division tend to support this thesis. Vast caches of Vietcong supplies were uncovered, although our troops failed to engage sizable numbers of enemy troops. American personnel reported to us that Vietcong troops, when hard pressed in War Zone C, regularly retreat to safety across the river into Cambodia. We were informed that three small airfields in Cambodia, located north and west of War Zone C, are, in the opinion of some observers, used regularly to resupply Vietcong troops in that vicinity, with each field averaging three C-47-type plane loads of supplies per day. We were also advised that Red Chinese personnel are operating boats and junks on the Oriental River in this area, ferrying supplies and personnel into and out of Vietnam.

(c) *Ending infiltration from the north*.—A major limiting factor on our ability to win the military war in South Vietnam is the extent of Communist infiltration from the north. This infiltration comes down the Ho Chi Minh trail, running from the southern part of North Vietnam over into eastern Laos through some choke points like the Mugia Pass, and then down truck roads through the Laotian jungle, finally cutting off at various points south of the 17th parallel, where supplies and personnel move back into South Vietnam in the I and II Corps areas. Originally this trail was little more than a precarious kind of coolie footpath. But today it is a full truck route over large sections, although the terrain through which it passes, and the spots where supplies and personnel move back into South Vietnam, are still jungle and difficult mountain areas. The problems in locating and interdicting this truck traffic by air alone are staggering. In fact we cannot interdict it completely in this way; we can only limit it. Military operations in Laos itself are forbidden by the Laotian peace settlement of 1962. Yet rarely has a major military campaign been conducted with such a readily breachable flank as the one our forces possess in South Vietnam.

(d) *Public relations and television*.—Since the support of the people is absolutely essential for the success of military operations against the Vietcong and the establishment of a stable government, every effort must be made to develop adequate communication facilities between the Vietnamese Government and its own people. The high rate of illiteracy in Vietnam means that this need can be filled only to a very limited degree by newspapers and other printed media. A good deal of interest has been generated within the past year in the establishment of a TV system. Broadcast facilities were installed some months ago in three superannuated C-121 (Constellation) Navy aircraft, known as the Blue Eagles. One of these three planes was badly damaged during the April 13 mortar attack on Tan Son Nhut. A second received minor damage but still flew the same night, with Mr. Chamber-

lain aboard. In fact the gentleman from Michigan has been one of the most enthusiastic and effective supporters of this whole project. The subcommittee shares his enthusiasm and joins in his appeal for rapid improvement in its effectiveness.

The present obsolete aircraft are limited in both range and cruising capacity. If P-3 (Electra) aircraft were substituted the TV mission could operate from areas of more assured security and would not be subject to the threat of constant attack at Tan Son Nhut. Their area of coverage and their transmission time on station would also be greatly increased. Present TV broadcast hours in Vietnam are all too brief and the programs, especially those beamed to the Vietnamese, are inadequate. At the present time we broadcast over two separate channels, one for American troops and the other for the Vietnamese. But coverage is limited to the immediate Saigon area. We need to extend the sweep of television to a much larger segment of the country.

Naturally the number of television sets available in Vietnam is small. The subcommittee found, however, that there is very great interest in television on the part of the Vietnamese, and any kind of set is in great demand. It would be possible to set up a public set in a central spot in each community, as is now done in San Juan, P.R., for example, for the use of a whole village.

If the Vietnamese people are to support our efforts in their country they need to know what is going on. Certainly they ought to be able to see and hear their own premier. And if they are to vote intelligently in the September elections, they should be acquainted with the issues and candidates. The potentiality of television in bringing the people of Vietnam into a closer participation in their own government is almost unlimited. The committee believes, however, that it has not so far been adequately taken advantage of. A few dollars here—less perhaps than might be spent in a single B-52 raid—could pay enormous political dividends. We believe an all-out effort in this direction is desirable, and recommend the enlistment of the full and prompt support of the American television industry toward this objective.

14. Thailand: To get a full understanding of what is going on in Vietnam one also needs to visit Thailand. The subcommittee was most impressed with what we saw there and with the outstanding job being done by General Stillwell, who served as General Westmoreland's deputy before coming to his present command. General Stillwell's understanding of the threat we face in South Vietnam serves him well in Thailand.

Like most southeast Asian countries, Thailand faces a poverty problem and is in need of modernization and improvement. But one can already see the beneficial results of American aid there and the opportunities which further help can provide. Unlike Vietnam, Thailand has a long history of independence, and a heritage of nationalism which makes the country a cohesive unit. Friendly relations between the Thais and ourselves have existed for many years.

Thailand has supported our policy, recognizing that if Communist invasion and subversion of the "war-of-liberation" variety succeeded in Vietnam, she would unquestionably be the next target. Indeed within the past couple of years a familiar pattern of Communist terrorism has already developed in the northeastern part of Thailand,

9565

closest to Laos and Communist China. Villages have been attacked and community leaders and teachers assassinated or kidnaped, just as the Vietcong have been doing in South Vietnam. Because of terrain, distance from Bangkok, and relative inaccessibility these areas have been the most economically depressed in Thailand and hence more susceptible to Communist agitation and recruitment. To some extent a similar threat has also been felt in the southern panhandle near Malaya, where bands of Communist guerrillas driven out of Malaya during the fighting there are still hiding out.

In Thailand the main thrust of American aid has been toward opening up lines of communication between Bangkok and the northeast, so that this area can be better protected and more rapidly developed. A modern, 2-lane superhighway, the Freedom Highway, extending part of the way out of Bangkok in this direction, has been built with American funds. Other improvements and extensions are projected. The subcommittee believes that funds spent on such projects as this will be of great benefit to us and should be supported generously. Thailand is one place where the American foreign aid dollar is paying off well in behalf of American interests.

Because of the threat in the northeast and the proximity of Thailand to Vietnam, one of that country's most urgent needs is for improved conventional military forces, including helicopters for rapid jungle movement, like those of the U.S. 1st Air Cavalry. Help is urgently needed too in building an effective river patrol system along the extensive Mekong River border with Laos.

The subcommittee recommends support for these projects. In fact, considering the similarity of the threat now emerging in northeast Thailand, the subcommittee believes that military assistance funds for Thailand could be handled more expeditiously if they were incorporated, as is now done with those for Vietnam, directly into the defense authorization and appropriation legislation.

**15. Japan:** Japan is a long way from Vietnam and has taken little or no interest in our current involvement there. Yet the subcommittee, on the basis of discussions with Ambassador Reischauer, believes that Japan can play an important role in the future of Vietnam as well as Asia generally.

Japan is by far the most modern, efficient, and productive nation in Asia. In fact Japan has now become one of the most productive industrial nations in the world. With an area only the size of California, she has a gross national product equal to that of all of Africa or all of Latin America, greater than that of Communist China, twice that of India, and equal in fact to that of all the rest of Asia combined, excluding China and India. So when it comes to helping nations like Vietnam get on their feet economically, Japanese assistance could prove to be extremely valuable. Once the military situation has been brought under control, she can and should play a major role in helping South Vietnam rebuild herself.

With an allied-imposed constitution that outlawed war and banned all military forces, Japan has thus far been able to avoid facing up to the military realities of the Far East. Yet the rapid expansion of Communist China's nuclear capability is expected to lead to some substantial changes in her attitude and a greater concern with her own defense problems. While she has tended in the past to look on China

with favor, as the source of her own heritage, the Greece to her Rome so to speak, and has deplored what she regarded as an uncompromising American attitude toward the Red Chinese, there are indications now that the Communists' bitter reactions to America's 1965 Christmas peace offensive in Vietnam have forced a reappraisal in Japan's thinking. If Japan does take a more realistic view of her defense problems and begins, as now seems probable, to assert a position of political leadership in Asia more in keeping with her economic superiority, perhaps we can hope for increased support from other Asian powers for our efforts to contain the spread of communism.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the finding and comments set forth above, the subcommittee submits the following specific recommendations:

1. We are convinced that a military defeat of the Vietcong, while no doubt requiring a reasonable degree of political stability within South Vietnam, does not require a full and complete solution to all of Vietnam's many complex economic, social, and political problems. These can largely be solved only by the Vietnamese people themselves. Yet we detect some feeling here in this country that a major military commitment will be required in Vietnam until all these problems have been solved, thus creating the discouraging prospect of an interminable and open end situation. We therefore recommend that in order to facilitate greater public understanding of the war, official statements distinguish more carefully between containing the immediate and overriding military threat which now faces South Vietnam, and the longer, slower, harder, and essentially local job of building a stable and prosperous society in South Vietnam.

2. Holding Vietnamese territory already cleared of Vietcong forces and securing it against further Vietcong attack is also a job which must increasingly be transferred from American to ARVN forces and Vietnamese national police units. For this purpose an increase in ARVN forces and in their training is recommended.

3. We recommend a substantial and rapid increase in TV broadcasting facilities in Vietnam directed toward informing the Vietnamese people and strengthening their readiness for carrying out democratic procedures.

4. We strongly recommend that serious attention be given to the growing problem of Vietcong use of Cambodian sanctuary, including the possibility of limiting the use of the Mekong River. We also recommend that the committee undertake its own inquiry into whether Cambodia is aiding the Vietcong as has been alleged in some press reports.

5. We support an increase in military assistance funds for Thailand and recommend that these funds be included as part of the Defense Department authorization and appropriation, as is done with Vietnam military assistance funds.

6. We recommend retention of the 1-year rotation policy for combat troops in Vietnam.

7. We recommend that prompt action be taken to extend and liberalize R. & R. arrangements for combat troops.

8. While the matter is outside the jurisdiction of this committee, we would recommend that Congress exempt from income tax all military pay earned in Vietnam.

9. We recommend the recommissioning of a reserve fleet cruiser or battleship to provide additional naval gunfire support for ground forces ashore.

10. We recommend installation of air-conditioning equipment in the patient wards of the evacuation hospitals in Vietnam, where feasible.

11. We urge all possible speed in producing and supplying additional helicopters, especially the heavy-duty Chinook, to meet the urgent needs of infantry forces and special forces troops in Vietnam.

12. We strongly approve of the increase in South Korean forces stationed in South Vietnam that is now underway. Their record in combat and in carrying out civic actions in cooperation with the Vietnamese people has shown that they can make a unique and most valuable contribution to our common effort.

13. In carrying out the longer, more difficult job of building a stable, prosperous, and representative society in South Vietnam, we recommend that American civilians, including Peace Corps personnel, be recruited to assist with this effort, subject to the wishes of the Vietnamese Government, and as the military situation permits. We also recommend that similar units from South Korea, Thailand, Japan, and the United Nations be invited to join in this effort, again subject to the wishes of the Vietnamese Government.

14. While recognizing the problems involved in developing effective election procedures in a nation like Vietnam while war is still in progress, we nevertheless recommend that everything possible continue to be done to encourage the Vietnamese Government to move rapidly toward the establishment of a more representative government in South Vietnam, based on the expression, through free elections, of the wishes of the Vietnamese people.

#### V. CONCLUSION

In summary, the subcommittee believes the fight in Vietnam is a proper commitment for our country militarily, politically, and morally. We believe it is in line with our historic policy to resist aggression, both Communist and Fascist. We believe our Armed Forces are beginning to win a military victory over the Vietcong, and doing a vastly better and more effective job than some reports have indicated and that chances for such a military outcome will be improved if the complex political situation can be stabilized.

We recognize the immense help which countries like Thailand, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand have given in this conflict and believe that efforts should continue to be made to enlist further Asian support for our operations in Vietnam.

Once the major military threat has been contained, we believe the United States must also help the people of South Vietnam, in accordance with the wishes of their elected government, in building a stable, prosperous, and representative society of their own.

We congratulate and commend our top military commander in Vietnam, Gen. William C. Westmoreland. General Westmoreland not only has directed a brilliant military campaign against the Vietcong,

he has also displayed a remarkably effective grasp of the complex social, political, and economic problems in Vietnam.

The subcommittee also wishes to record its high regard for the other top officers involved in our Vietnamese commitment, in particular Adm. U. S. Grant Sharp, U.S. Navy, Pacific commander; Lt. Gen. Lewis W. Walt, U.S. Marine Corps, Marine Amphibious Force commander; and Maj. Gen. Richard Stillwell, commander, MACTHAI. All these officers display the same broad appreciation of the political and economic realities in southeast Asia that we found in General Westmoreland, and the American people can have the highest confidence in their abilities.

The Vietnam war has been a complex and controversial issue for Congress and the American people. Some of this controversy stems, we believe, from the fact that press accounts, perhaps inevitably, have focused more on specific daily details than on general trends. The most important message of this subcommittee to the Congress and to the American people, therefore, is one of encouragement and hope. Undoubtedly there will be difficulties and disappointments ahead in Vietnam. There will be downs as well as ups before the matter is finally resolved. But we strongly believe that this Nation can achieve our objectives in Vietnam, and that our commitment there should be regarded not so much as a problem but as a challenge and an opportunity. Here again we have the chance to help another developing country get on its own feet and begin building a new society, in peace, in accordance with its own wishes, and unharassed and unmolested by its neighbors. Surely it is no less important that this opportunity be available today to a small and faraway country in Asia called Vietnam, than it should have been available in 1938 to a small and faraway country in Europe called Czechoslovakia.

Certainly if the American GI, in a few short months, can, as we have seen him do, master the complex techniques of fighting guerrilla forces in the harsh and unfamiliar jungles and mountains of Vietnam, then other agencies of our Government should be no less successful in mastering the economic and political boobytraps that lie ahead on the road toward establishing a free and peaceful South Vietnam in a free and prosperous and peaceful Asia.

Respectfully submitted,

SAMUEL S. STRATTON, *Chairman.*  
ROBERT L. LEGGETT.  
FLOYD V. HICKS.  
CHARLES E. CHAMBERLAIN.  
ROBERT T. STAFFORD.

JUNE 15, 1966.

APPENDIX A—ITINERARY

April 7: 1500 Departed Friendship Airport, Baltimore.  
April 7: 2330 Arrived in Honolulu.  
April 8: Honolulu, CINCPAC briefing. Departed Bangkok.  
(International Date Line)  
April 10: 0130 Arrived Bangkok, Thailand: Conference with General Stillwell; MACTHAI briefing.  
April 11: 0900 Arrived Pleiku, visited II Corps Advisory group and Special Forces Camp at Pleime; flew to An Khe for briefing and visit with 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile); flew to Republic of Korea Tiger Division; flew from Qui Nhon to carrier, *U.S.S. Enterprise*.  
April 12: Tour of carrier, *U.S.S. Enterprise*; flew to Chu Lai, visited 1st Marine Division for briefing; flew to Cam Ranh Bay visited logistical area; flew to Can Tho for visit with IV Corps Advisory Team.  
April 13: Can Tho, briefing with IV Corps Advisory Group; flew to Vung Tau, visit with Senior Advisor 3d Coastal District at Cat Lo; briefing on Game Warden and Market Time; flew to Binh Ba for visit with 1st Infantry Division; flew to Cu Chi.  
April 14: Cu Chi, visit with 25th Infantry Division; flew to Tay Ninh, visit with Special Forces Team; flew to Bien Hoa, visit with General Westmoreland, and visit to 93rd Evacuation Hospital, and visit with 3d Tactical Fighter Wing; flew to Bangkok.  
April 15: Bangkok, visit with Ambassador Martin; flew to Udorn, Thailand, briefing and tour; flew to Ubon, briefing and tour; return to Bangkok.  
April 16: Departed Bangkok.  
April 16: 2200 Arrived Tokyo, Japan.  
April 17-18: Tokyo. Briefings at U.S. Embassy.  
April 18: 1530 Departed Tokyo.  
(International Date Line)  
April 19: 0130 Arrived Dulles International Airport.

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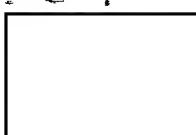
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